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O 191530Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1333  
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 4331  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 1292  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 3697  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE 3124  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 3431  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 1327

S E C R E T BEIRUT 000408

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STATE FOR DS/CC; DS/DSS/ITA, DS/IP/NEA; NEA/EX

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2018  
TAGS: ASEC PTER LE  
SUBJECT: BEIRUT CORE EAC MEETING MARCH 18, 2008

Classified By: CDA Michele Sison for reason 1.4(d)

1.(S) At 1430 hours of March 18, 2008, Charge Sison convened a meeting of the Core Emergency Action Committee (EAC). Present were CDA, RSO, POL, DAO, CONS and RAO.

¶2. (S) The Core EAC met to discuss additional concepts being considered to augment the security practices for Embassy personnel unofficial movements off compound. The Core EAC agreed to adopt a proposal that would allow Embassy personnel to travel to a variety of locations within the greater Beirut vicinity on unofficial moves while simultaneously attempting to increase the randomness in travel patterns of Embassy personnel. Embassy motorcades will now be permitted to travel for unofficial purposes in established geographic zones, selected at random by RSO on a weekly basis. All travel will continue to be done with armed Embassy bodyguards in armored vehicles. As stated in previous EAC cables, when conducting unofficial moves no more than three Americans will be permitted in one vehicle and no more than six Americans will be allowed in one location at the same time. Limitations on numbers of personnel in one location for official movements remain subject to review based upon the diplomatic initiative being advanced. An all hands country team meeting was held on 3/19 to provide information to Embassy personnel, and Embassy employees are being cautioned to utilize stringent operational security practices in discussions regarding this policy.

¶3. (S) Also under review by the Core EAC was a policy that limited the arrival of US military aircraft to Beirut International Airport (BIA) to the hours of darkness. In light of recent threat reporting against US naval vessels in the region, specifically the USS Cole, it was agreed that the policy would remain in effect until May 15 when the policy would again be reviewed.

¶4. (S) The EAC also reviewed the broader topic of travel of all personnel on commercial airlines through BIA. RSO strongly recommended that as an additional security measure, movement to and from BIA was best conducted during the hours of darkness. Limitations in the number of flights to and from BIA might limit the application of this procedure, but all permanent personnel were to be advised of this scheduling preference, and control officers were to be instructed to advise TDY personnel of this preference as well.

¶5. (S) Since March 22nd is the upcoming traditional end of the forty day mourning period of Hizballah terrorist leader Imad Mughniah, EAC believes that there is cause for concern.

However, in light of our current robust and heightened security posture, no significant changes are warranted at this time. CONS also believes that another warden message is not required, since the last warden message dated March 4th, cited the recent escalation of the threat level.

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SISON